



CS Brazil Market Research

Licensing and Registration of Engineering Professionals in Brazil July 2005

Overview

Brazil has a large and diversified economy that offers US companies many opportunities to export their goods and services. As Brazil's largest single trading partner, the US enjoys a strong reputation in a variety of sectors. This report is one of a series that is published by the US Commercial Service's team of sector experts throughout the year. If you do not see an opportunity for your product here, please check out our other reports at www.buyusa.gov/brazil and consider contacting us directly to find out if we can help you export to Brazil.

Licensing and Registration of Engineering Professionals in Brazil

The engineering and construction industry in Brazil is one of the most advanced in Latin America. Several Brazilian companies have participated in state-of-the-art projects not only in Brazil but also in other Latin American countries, the United States, Europe and Africa.

US companies interested in establishing an office in Brazil for architectural, engineering or construction activities must hire a local professional who holds a license registered at the Regional Council of Engineers and Architects (CREA) to act as the "responsible engineer". The responsible engineer can be a Brazilian citizen or a foreign national who holds a permanent residence visa in Brazil.

The registration process at the CREA for professionals graduated from Brazilian universities is straightforward upon presentation of their original diplomas. However, architects and engineers holding diplomas issued in the United States must first have the US diploma validated by a Brazilian public university. In the State of Sao Paulo this can be done by the Universidade de Sao Paulo (USP), Universidade de Campinas (UNICAMP), Universidade Estadual Paulista (UNESP) and the Universidade Federal de São Carlos.

USP has a Double Degree Agreement with some universities in France and Italy for undergraduate students, but it does not yet have an agreement with US universities.

The validation of diploma is a long and time-consuming process. Foreign school records must first be notarized by the Brazilian Embassy or Consulate in the United States and translated into Portuguese by a sworn translator. Although the time required for validation may differ from one educational institution to another, the process used by the Civil Engineering



School of USP (Poli) provides a good example.

Civil engineering students in Brazil must take at least 3,900 class-hours to be entitled to take the final exams. Therefore, Poli does not even consider the application if the applicant has not covered at least 70% of those hours, i.e., 2,730 class-hours in the United States.

Once the applicant meets this minimum number of class-hours, US school records go through four different departments for analysis. Professors compare the US course contents against Brazilian courses and conduct an in-depth analysis. This process can take from two to six months. Several factors affect the length of time, such as the number of applications in the pipeline and the availability of professors. However, certificates issued by well-known and reliable institutions in the United States reduce the time required for analysis. If it is determined that courses are missing, or that course contents differ from Brazilian university courses, the applicant can take an exam in Brazil, or take the course and exam just for the missing subject.

The next step is registering at the Regional Council of Engineers and Architects (CREA) by submitting the following documents:

- Application form;
- Original diploma notarized by the Brazilian Embassy or Consulate in the United States and validated by a Brazilian public university recognized by the Ministry of Education;
- School records indicating credits, courses and number of hours taken for each course;
- Content of each course;
- Other personal documents

CREA's Special Committee analyzes the validity of these documents prior to approving the applicant's registration as a professional architect or engineer. The registration then needs to be ratified by the Federal Council of Engineering and Architecture (CONFEA). This phase takes at least another six months.

Foreign architects and engineers that hold a temporary work visa in Brazil can obtain a temporary registration at the CREA. The steps to follow are the same as above, with the exception that the registration does not need to be ratified by CONFEA. CREA's Special Committee will determine the areas of activity that the applicant can work based on the school programs that the applicant covered in the foreign school. The period of validity of registration will be equivalent to the period of the professional's work contract in Brazil. One of the pre-requisites for a temporary registration is that the employer assigns a Brazilian architect or engineer with same or higher degree to assist the foreign professional on the day-to-day work.

US companies that want to avoid the lengthy procedure to register a US professional at the CREA should consider partnering with reliable Brazilian firms. The US Commercial Service offers a variety of programs to help US companies find business partners in Brazil.

- For more information about export opportunities in this sector contact US Commercial Service Trade Specialist Marina Konno at:
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- For a good overview of exporting to Brazil, please look at our US Country Commercial Guide to Brazil:
www.focusbrazil.org.br/ccg
- US Commercial Service in Brazil:
www.buyusa.gov/brazil
- For more reports on this sector in other countries, please visit Export.gov's site for US Commercial Service Market Research Worldwide:
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